

# Denali National Park and Preserve

## Interpretive Theme Matrix Page 1 of 6

Subject Matter and Interpretive Theme Statement	Concepts and Ideas	Tangibles: Topics and Stories+	Intangibles / Universals
<p><b>1. Extensive Natural Ecosystems</b></p> <p>Denali's intact, natural ecosystem embodies a wisdom from which humans can learn and promote the workings of a healthy planet for a sustainable future.</p>	<p>Some examples of <b>concepts and ideas</b> to be included in the themes. (Some of these concepts may potentially develop or combine into specific program and interpretive media themes.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unaltered ecosystems can serve as baselines to understand ecosystems that have been impacted.</li> <li>• Unaltered ecosystems provide excellent opportunities for research and learning.</li> <li>• The ambitious vision of ANILCA was to surpass previous conservation efforts by setting aside vast areas that could protect large unfragmented and intact ecosystems. Conserving large protected areas requires recognizing that local people are part of the ecosystem and accommodating some level of human consumptive use of resources.</li> <li>• Intact ecosystems are rare because human activity has eliminated species, altered habitat, and fundamentally changed natural relationships on much of Earth's surface.</li> <li>• An ecosystem consists of living and non-living components and elements seen and unseen.</li> <li>• Complete understanding of such a complex system is impossible.</li> <li>• The Denali ecosystem is dependent upon the global ecosystem and vulnerable to changes that originate beyond the park's borders</li> <li>• Denali's ecosystem is recognized to be of international significance. (Biosphere Reserve)</li> </ul>	<p>Some examples representing the types of <b>stories</b> that could be told under this theme ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Species specific stories</li> <li>• Species interactions</li> <li>• Illustrations of complexity</li> <li>• Short-term and long-term change</li> <li>• Wildland values</li> <li>• Role of science in preserving parks</li> <li>• Role of science in helping us understand the world at large</li> <li>• Human interaction with landscapes</li> <li>• Opportunity for hands-on discovery</li> <li>• Natural cycles</li> <li>• Exotic species</li> <li>• Nexus of biological and physical worlds</li> </ul>	<p>Some examples of deeper <b>meanings</b> of topics.</p> <p><b>Intangibles:</b> Ecosystem, Biodiversity, Complexity Preservation Rare Sustainability Knowledge Conservation Heritage</p> <p><b>Universals:</b> Protection Wonder Humility Mystery Curiosity Survival Wisdom Health</p>

+ These topics are representative, a partial list. They are not intended to be all-inclusive (in fact they could never be) nor are they intended to exclude any topic.

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<p><b>2. Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat</b></p> <p>The size and ecological integrity of Denali preserves a home of extraordinary quality for populations of large northern mammals, birds, and other wildlife, where they can live and be observed interacting with one another and their natural habitat with minimal human disruption.</p>	<p>Some examples of <b>concepts and ideas</b> to be included in the themes. (Some of these concepts may potentially develop or combine into specific program and interpretive media themes.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denali offers the visitor unparalleled opportunities to view large northern mammals and their interactions in their natural habitat.</li> <li>• Large unfragmented habitat is needed to ensure survival of large mammal species.</li> <li>• Despite the park's vast protected area, Denali's wildlife remains vulnerable to human activity beyond park borders.</li> <li>• Through management, Denali seeks to preserve the integrity of animal populations and their interactions with one another.</li> <li>• Denali's success as a wildlife sanctuary and a wildlife viewing area is due in part to thoughtful management, but it depends heavily on our visitors.</li> <li>• Opportunities to study natural wildlife activity and interactions are rare and valued by scientists.</li> <li>• Wildlife habitat includes food, water and shelter in quantities and qualities suitable to specific populations and the communities they form</li> </ul>	<p>Some examples representing the types of <b>stories</b> that could be told under this theme ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling legislation and reason for park expansion.</li> <li>• Species dynamics.</li> <li>• Food web.</li> <li>• Migrations</li> <li>• Adaptations</li> <li>• Role of science in helping to make management decisions.</li> <li>• Land designations and management.</li> <li>• Sub-arctic habitat.</li> </ul>	<p>Some examples of deeper <b>meanings</b> of topics.</p> <p><b>Intangibles:</b> Time Interaction Size Northern Relationships Vulnerability</p> <p><b>Universals:</b> Integrity Quality Preserve Survival Life Death Community</p>

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<b>3. Denali/Mt. McKinley</b>  Mount McKinley's magnitude captivates human imagination and inspires exploration and protection of the Denali region's landscapes, wildlife and wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the tallest peak in North America and so dominant a feature of the landscape, Mount McKinley is a character with whom people from all over the world seek to interact at various levels.</li> <li>• Mount McKinley provides climbers from around the world the opportunity to test their mettle.</li> <li>• The Mountain came into being because of and continues to be shaped by great geologic forces.</li> <li>• From Native myths to artists to climbers, Mt. McKinley continues to engage the human imagination.</li> <li>• So great is its presence on the landscape, Mt. McKinley creates its own weather.</li> <li>• Rugged and absolute, Mt. McKinley offers a dispassionate challenge to humans seeking to experience wilderness and wildness, especially to the extreme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geologic processes.</li> <li>• Weather and its influences.</li> <li>• Mountaineering.</li> <li>• Challenges and character building.</li> <li>• History of exploration past to present.</li> <li>• The Mountain and human imagination.</li> <li>• Absolutes of the mountain environment.</li> <li>• Glacial processes and influences.</li> </ul>	<b>Intangibles:</b> Size Time Challenge Responsibility Vulnerability  <b>Universals:</b> Beauty Danger Fear Survival Life Death Power Humility

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<b>4. Wilderness Values and Wilderness Recreation</b>  Denali's wild lands create a refuge from modern civilization where we can discover, challenge and connect with the primal pulses and prevailing forces of nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denali provides accessible and diverse Alaska wilderness experiences.</li> <li>• Denali's wilderness provides few amenities and little guidance, so backcountry travelers must be self reliant and interested in outstanding wilderness challenges from hiking without trails to crossing rivers without bridges to climbing the tallest peak in North America.,</li> <li>• The opportunity for true solitude is rare in modern world, but is abundantly available in the Denali backcountry.</li> <li>• The presence of untrammelled wildlife and natural processes are an integral part of the wilderness experience at Denali.</li> <li>• Historically, there has been a strong movement in Denali to preserve its wilderness character to a higher standard than found in many parks and wilderness areas.</li> <li>• Wilderness is part of our national heritage and can be an inspiration for all peoples on the planet.</li> <li>• Wilderness does not imply a land without people, but a land respected such that the imprint of humankind's work is substantially unnoticeable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting Denali means embracing limits to access, behaviors, and activities.</li> <li>• Wilderness and the American mind.</li> <li>• The challenges of balancing access and preservation (e.g. motorized vs. non-motorized access).</li> <li>• Wilderness, especially accessibly wilderness, is an increasingly rare commodity on the planet.</li> <li>• Wilderness Act and ANILCA.</li> </ul>	<b>Intangibles:</b> Heritage Responsibility Vulnerable Degradation Value Solitude Trust  <b>Universals:</b> Protect Preserve Beauty Survival Protect Loss

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<p><b>5. People and the Land</b></p> <p>The ways Denali shapes and is shaped by the character, lives and values of people past and present offers us insights into our relationship with our natural heritage.</p>	<p>Some examples of <b>concepts and ideas</b> to be included in the themes. (Some of these concepts may potentially develop or combine into specific program and interpretive media themes.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With large predators, swift rivers, tall peaks and uncountable other risks and dangers, the Denali landscape challenges humans to find their limits, both personal and as a society.</li> <li>• Denali preserves human pre-historic and historic structures, artifacts, stories, and practices which demonstrate thousands of years of human involvement in this land.</li> <li>• The structures, artifacts and stories of the Denali region's early explorers, miners, and park rangers help us understand the entire pioneer era in North America which was crucial for forming the culture and character of the American people and our institutions.</li> <li>• Denali's conservation history reflects changing conservation history and values over time.</li> <li>• The continuation of subsistence practice in the park additions and preserve reflects both 1) a change in our understanding of land conservation in which we accept the ancient role of people as part of the natural ecosystem and 2) a necessary recognition that large scale conservation depends on meeting the needs of rural inhabitants who depend upon park resources for food, shelter, and cultural preservation.</li> </ul>	<p>Some examples representing the types of <b>stories</b> that could be told under this theme ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional/indigenous connections to the Denali region.</li> <li>• Past and contemporary subsistence use.</li> <li>• Human history since it became a park.</li> <li>• Denali's role in the national conservation movement past and present.</li> <li>• In Denali, natural systems are allowed to happen with little or no influence from humans.</li> <li>• Wildland values.</li> </ul>	<p>Some examples of deeper <b>meanings</b> of topics.</p> <p><b>Intangibles:</b>  Dependence  History  Heritage  Challenge  Family  Aesthetics  Dependence  Interdependence</p> <p><b>Universals:</b>  Beauty  Survival  Life  Death  Humility  Awe  Hope</p>

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<b>6. Dynamic Change</b>  Denali preserves a dynamic landscape, ever shifting, changing and adjusting to cycles and processes, seen and unseen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As is the essence of natural systems, Denali is inextricably linked to the rest of the planet.</li> <li>• Denali's current landscape is but a glimpse of a continuum of change brought about by geological forces.</li> <li>• Paleontological resources within the park illustrate qualities of this dynamic landscape, as well as the potential for a wealth of natural curiosities yet discovered.</li> <li>• Through science, humans can investigate aspects of systems and processes at work within the Denali landscape, therefore garnering a greater understanding of this landscape now and in the future, and in a broader global context.</li> <li>• Increasingly, human activity is driving measurable change in Denali's community of life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glacial processes</li> <li>• Geologic processes</li> <li>• Climate shifts and changes</li> <li>• Extinctions</li> <li>• Regime shifts</li> <li>• Invasive species</li> <li>• Dinosaur finds</li> <li>• Isostatic rebound</li> </ul>	<b>Intangibles:</b> Time Responsibility Curiosity Heritage Vulnerability  <b>Universals:</b> Life Death Wonder Power Awe Humility